An Enactivist Critique of Protevi's Political Affect

Abstract:

John Protevi's project aims to combine the embodied school of affective cognition with Deleuze's poststructuralist philosophy. I examine the validity of Protevi's claim that his reading of Deleuze manages to "sharpen, extend and / or radicalize some of their [4EA] explicit presuppositions, that Deleuze lets us go "above" and "below" the abstract subject of embodied cognitive psychology, "above" to politics, and "below" to biology. I argue that rather than radicalizing phenomenologically-informed 4EA, Protevi's reductive reading of Deleuze falls short of both Deleuze and phenomonogical-4EA in his understanding of what it means for living systems to be "radically relational".

Protevi's treatment of living systems splits mind, body and world into externally and weakly interacting encapsulated redundancies: bodily affect modules are encapsulated off from the conscious subject which they motivate, outside of awareness, from below. Meanwhile, individual subjective intentionalities are encapsulated off from the group intentionality that enculturates them from above. We are not given a way to see affective and cognitive-intentional processes of persons as co-implicating each other as an inseparable mesh, nor the joint activities of discursive groups as an enriching furthering of self-constitution rather than as an invading impingement from 'above' the self.

Introduction;

John Protevi(2010a) introduces his project in the following way:

> "I get to my notion of human nature as "body politic" by putting the "embodied mind" school of cognitive science together with the post-structuralist French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. What attracted me to the embodied mind school (e.g., Hubert Dreyfus, Evan Thompson, Alva Noë, and the late Francisco Varela) is the critique of the standard computer metaphor of cognition as information processing and its alternate vision of cognition as an organism directing itself in its environment. Such embodied cognition is inescapably affective; the old division of reason and emotion needs to be rethought as "affective cognition."
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> "What Deleuze brings to the table is a wide-ranging materialist ontology, so that we can use the same basic concepts of self-organizing systems in both natural and social registers. This enables me to couple the "politic" to the "body," to connect the social and the somatic. Basically, Deleuze lets us go "above" and "below" the subject; "above" to politics, and "below" to biology."

Protevi is worried that a 4ea-type thinking runs the risk of missing the 'above' and 'below' in its abstractive determination of subjectivity. He has spent the past few decades trying to convince us that his reading of DG gives him a method of analyzing notorious affective-socio-political situations such as Columbine that can supplement 4ea accounts. He explains:

> "Cognitive science, even the 4EA schools, is still beholden to two unexamined presuppositions: first, that the unit of analysis is an abstract subject, "the" subject, one that is supposedly not marked in its development by social practices, such as gendering, that influence affective cognition, and second, that culture is a repository of positive, problem-solving aids that enable "the" subject." (Protevi 2010b)

I don't deny that there is room within the diversified embodied enactive tent for Protevi's perspective. But I want to focus on a small segment of the field that includes such writers as Gallagher , Zahavi, De Jaegher, Thompson, Ratcliffe, Rouse and Varela, who integrate enactivism with the phenomenologies of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and others. My goal in this paper is to examine the validity of Protevi's claim that his particular reading of Deleuze manages to "sharpen, extend and / or radicalize some of their [4EA] explicit presuppositions". (Deleuze and Wexler). I argue that rather than radicalizing phenomenologically-informed 4EA, Protevi's reductive reading of Deleuze falls short of both Deleuze and phenomonogical-4EA in his understanding of what it means for a living system to be "radically relational".

Protevi appropriates from a smorgasbord of sources spanning cultural anthropology, neuroscience, philosophy of mind and Continental philosophy , from which he produces a psychological account of cognition, affectivity and sociality human behavior that ends up in close proximity to the Darwinian cognitive-affective models of Prinz, Wexler, LeDoux and Haidt,

Like Haidt and Prinz, Protevi divides affect off from fact, subjective emotional sentiment from

value-neutral rational objectivity.

> "… most feelings are not under immediate rational control: they are built up from emotions patterned by institutionalized encounters, and must be dealt with ex post facto, if at all, by rational reflection." "In affective situations argumentations and facts lose their power. Affective attachments and intensities are more import to the supporters than the arguments of Trump". "Here, affects are stronger than facts. This is also the reason why the criticism of his arguments, lies, distortions, or failures is not enough to convince the supporters to stop supporting him."(Protevi 2017)"

Protevi's reductionist account treats the 'above' of socialization and the 'below' of biological conditioning as a split between the internal and the external.

Operating from below conscious subjectivity, Protevi proposes evolutionarily adaptive neurological modules that program subjects for prosocial behavior as well as for narrowly construed self-preservation. Impinging on persons from above are socially originating forms of conditioning

> "Zahavi (2005) and Gallagher (2005), among others, distinguish agency and ownership of bodily actions. Ownership is the sense that my body is doing the action, while agency is the sense that I am in control of the action, that the action is willed. Both are aspects of subjectivity, though they may well be a matter of pre-reflective self-awareness rather than full-fledged objectifying self-consciousness. But alongside subjectivity we need also to notice emergent assemblages that skip subjectivity and directly conjoin larger groups and the somatic. To follow this line of thought, let us accept that, in addition to non-subjective body control by reflexes, we can treat basic emotions as modular "affect programs" (Griffiths 1997) that run the body's hardware in the absence of conscious control. As with reflexes, ownership and agency are only retrospectively felt, at least in severe cases of rage in which the person "wakes up" to see the results of the destruction committed while he or she was in the grips of the rage. In this way we see two elements we need to take into account besides the notion of subjective agency: (1) that there is another sense of "agent" as non-subjective controller of bodily action, either reflex or basic emotion, and (2) that in some cases the military unit and non-subjective reflexes and basic emotions are intertwined in such a way as to bypass the soldiers' subjectivity qua controlled intentional action. In these cases the practical agent of the act of killing is not the individual person or subject, but the emergent assemblage of military unit and non-subjective reflex or equally non-subjective "affect program."
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> "A little more detail on the notion of a "rage agent" might be helpful at this point. Extreme cases of rage produce a modular agent or "affect program" that replaces the subject. Affect programs are emotional responses that are "complex, coordinated, and automated … unfold[ing] in this coordinated fashion without the need for conscious direction" (Griffiths 1997: 77). They are more than reflexes, but they are triggered well before any cortical processing can take place (though later cortical appraisals can dampen or accelerate the affect program). Griffiths makes the case that affect programs should be seen in light of Fodor's notion of modularity, which calls for a module to be "mandatory … opaque [we are aware of outputs but not the processes producing them] … and informationally encapsulated [the information in a module cannot access that in other modules]" (93; my comments in brackets). Perhaps second only to the question of adaptationism for the amount of controversy it has evoked, the use of the concept of modularity in evolutionary psychology is bitterly contested. I feel relatively safe proposing a very-widely

> distributed rage module or rage agent, since its adaptive value is widely attested to by its presence in other mammals, and since Panksepp 1998 is able to cite studies of direct electrical stimulation of the brain (ESB) and neurochemical manipulation as identifying homologous rage circuits in humans and other mammalian species (190)."
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> "In the berserker rage, the subject is overwhelmed by a chemical flood that triggers an evolutionarily primitive module which functions as an agent which runs the body's hardware in its place.""The vast majority of soldiers cannot kill in cold blood and need to kill in a desubjectified state, e.g., in reflexes, rages and panics." (Protevi 2008)

Protevi here isnt integrating a rage module with situational intentionality, except as the 'reflex' rage is switched on by a cognitive trigger, after which it proceeds independently of intention. He says: "a sense of agency is absent during the rage-induced or reflex-controlled act of killing", but Protevi doesn't seem to recognize that the lack of a conscious sense of agency does not mean that it isn't implicit. He splits the former off from the latter. They may be loosely integrated within the larger ecology of thought, body and social realm, but nevertheless can be talked about in 'modular' terms. A one-way conditioning is central to this relation between the cognitive trigger of a reflex rage assemblage and its appearance.

Ratcliffe and Thompson argue against Protevi's idea of affect as pre-programmed module split off from subjectivity.

> For most contemporary cognitive theorists, " Emotions are either evaluative constituents of propositional attitudes or they are distinct from such attitudes and thus peripheral to the way we relate to the world. The terms of current philosophical debates continue to privilege theoretical perspectives and propositional attitudes, and hence preclude any engagement with Heidegger's view, insofar as they are conducted within a set of shared presuppositions concerning the nature of human understanding which are utterly at odds with Heidegger's philosophical starting point."(Ratcliffe 2002)
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> "The inextricability of feeling and world-experience is not adequately acknowledged by philosophical approaches that impose, from the outset, a crisp distinction between bodily feeling and world-directed intentionality. Most philosophers admit that emotions incorporate both world-directedness and bodily feeling but they construe the two as separate ingredients (e.g. Lyons 1980). Some have argued that feelings can be world-directed. But, in so doing, they still retain the internal– external contrast and so fail, to some degree at least, to respect the relevant phenomenology. For example, Prinz (2004) argues that feelings can be about things other than the body but he adopts a non-phenomenological conception of intentionality and continues to assume that the phenomenology of feeling is internal in character. Goldie (2000), in contrast, does engage with the phenomenology. He claims that, in addition to having internally directed feelings, we also have 'feelings towards' – feelings that are at the same time world-directed intentional states." (Ratcliffe 2010)

Thompson(2007) writes:

”Evidence is now accumulating that experience-dependent brain activity in particular environmental contexts plays a huge role in the development of the individual brain. Rather than being a collection of pre-specified modules, the brain appears to be an organ that constructs itself in development through spontaneously generated and experience-dependent activity (Quartz & Sejnowski, 1997; Quartz, 1999; Karmiloff-Smith, 1998), a developmental process made possible by robust and flexible developmental mechanisms conserved in animal evolution (Gerhart & Kirschner, 1997).”

“At the neural level, brain systems traditionally seen as subserving separate functions of appraisal and emotion are inextricably interconnected. Hence ‘appraisal’ and ‘emotion’ cannot be mapped onto separate brain systems.”(Thompson 2009)

Pessoa (2008) provides extensive evidence from neuroscience that supports this view of the neural underpinnings of emotion and cognition. He presents three converging lines of evidence: (1) brain regions previously viewed as ‘affective’ are also involved in cognition; (2) brain regions previously viewed as ‘cognitive’ are also involved in emotion; and (3) the neural processes subserving emotion and cognition are integrated and thus non-modular.”

”Sense-making comprises emotion as much as cognition. The enactive approach does not view cognition and emotion as separate systems, but treats them as thoroughly integrated at biological, psychological, and phenomenological levels. The spatial containment language of internal/external or inside/outside (which frames the internalist/externalist debate) is inappropriate and misleading for understanding the peculiar sort of relationality belonging to intentionality, the lived body, or being-in-the-world. As Heidegger says, a living being is ‘in’ its world in a completely different sense from that of water being in a glass (Heidegger 1995, pp. 165–166)

“...appraisal and emotion processes are thoroughly interdependent at both psychological and neural levels (see also Colombetti and Thompson 2005). At the psychological level, one is not a mere means to the other (as in the idea that an appraisal is a means to the having of an emotion, and vice-versa); rather, they form an integrated and self-organizing emotion-appraisal state, an ‘emotional interpretation.’(Thompson 2009)

“Douglas F. Watt (1998) describes affect as ‘a prototype “whole brain event”’, but we could go further and say that affect is a prototypical whole-organism event. Affect has numerous dimensions that bind together virtually every aspect of the organism—the psychosomatic network of the nervous system, immune system, and endocrine system; physiological changes in the autonomic nervous system, the limbic system, and the superior cortex; facial-motor changes and global differential motor readiness for approach or withdrawal; subjective experience along a pleasure–displeasure valence axis; social signalling and coupling; and conscious evaluation and assessment (Watt, 1998). Thus the affective mind isn’t in the head, but in the whole body; and affective states are emergent in the reciprocal, co-determination sense: they arise from neural and somatic activity that itself is conditioned by the ongoing embodied awareness and action of the whole animal or person.”(Thompson 2001)

The point that Ratcliffe and Thompson are making about the inseparability of affect and cognition stems from their central thesis concerning the organizational and functional properties of phenomenologically-informed enactivism. For them, mind, body and world interact via a functionally integral normative goal-oriented purposiveness, an interactive asymmetry that lends

to the organism an operational closure or autonomy. This seemingly solipsistic aspect of living systems is the feature of 4ea accounts that concerns Protevi. He wonders, how can we explain being affected by our bodies and the world, including other people, if the basis of subjectivity is essentially closed upon itself?

Evan Thompson(2011) addressed concerns by Protevi about the overtones of subjectivism in his model.

> "A certain tendency to privilege interiority in autopoietic discourse has always worried me. I felt that worry in writing those words in *Mind in Life* about the reciprocal yet asymmetrical relation between interiority and exteriority, but I did not adequately address the worry because of another argument I was trying to advance, specifically that the genuine interiority of life is a precursor to the interiority of consciousness, and hence that the conception of nature presupposed in standard formulations of the hard problem or explanatory gap for consciousness-namely, that living nature has no genuine interiority-is misguided. So the task is to see whether we can retain the crucial advance that a phenomenological reading of the theory of autopoiesis provides, while situating that advance in an enriched and more balanced account of the dynamic co-emergence and mutual entrainment of living processes and their environments."

What Thompson has in mind when he speaks of aiming for a 'balanced' account of the relation between subjective interiority and exteriority is different from Protevi's idea of a radical relationality 'above' and 'below' the abstract subject. Protevi begins from structures, objects, modules, patterns which are self-contained 'selves' before and outside of their participation in relationships and assemblages of various kinds (distributed, differential, multiple, dynamical, reciprocal, multilevel) between brain, body and world. The interactive asymmetry that characterizes the operational closure between an autonomous self-organized living system and its environment does not lead to an abstract subject closed off from its body and its world but a normatively oriented system of reciprocal transactions that functions more primordially and more integrally than the self-contained modular components or mini-selves of Protevi's system .

> In Donn Welton's words: "*The organism enacts an environment as the environment entrains the organism*. Both are *necessary* and neither, by itself, is *sufficient* for the process of sense-making."
> "But now comes the tricky point. What we have just said implies that the relation between organism and environment is *reciprocal*, for each acts as a control parameter for the other. But this kind of reciprocity does not imply that their relation is not also *asymmetrical*, in the relevant sense of asymmetry. Although the physical and energetic coupling between a living being and the physicochemical environment is symmetrical, with each partner exerting more influence on the other at different times, the living being *modulates* the parameters of this coupling in a way the environment typically does not. Living beings, precisely because they are autopoietic and adaptive, can "surf" environmental events and modulate them to their own ends, like a bird gliding on the wind. *Interactional asymmetry* is precisely this capacity to modulate the coupling with the environment. If we lose sight of this interactional asymmetry, then we lose the ability to account for the directedness proper to living beings in their sense-making, and hence we lose the resources we need to connect sense-making to intentionality." (Living Ways of Sense-making)
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> "One of the basic propositions of the enactive approach is that being autonomous is a necessary

> condition for a system to embody original intentionality and normativity. Unless the processes that make up a system constitute that system as an adaptive self-sustaining unity, there is no perspective or reference point for sense-making and hence no cognizing agent. Without autonomy (operational closure) there is no original meaning; there is only the derivative meaning attributed to certain processes by an outside observer." (Thompson 2009)

Protevi's berserker rage, in bypassing ("skipping" as he says) subjectivity , also bypasses intentionality, which contradicts the assertion by enactivist writers like Ratcliffe and Thompson that affect is inseparable from intentionality. When it comes to feeling , it should not be a matter of a process that simply skips subjectivity and awareness.

Protevi(2010b) pays lip service to enactivist critiques of bottom-up top-down approaches by denying that there is a unidirectional input-output flow to embodied cognition.

"…the 4EA approach breaks with any unidirectional information processing model, in which cognition is the middle slice in what Susan Hurley called the "classical sandwich": sensory input / processing of representations /motor output."

But he leaves intact a modular, homuncular view of mentation in which it still makes sense to talk about interactive relations, or loops, between a bottom and a top, which he articulates in terms of reciprocal feedback between primitive cell assemblies constituting automatic, near-reflex affect programs and rational conscious processes. For instance, in Human Nature, Multiplicity, Protevi hypothesizes "capacities for bottom-up [limbic -based] pacific emotions (joy in cooperation, helping, and caring) at the same time as those for top-down anger control."

Thompson(2007) counters:

> "…traditional neuroscience has tried to map brain organization onto a hierarchical, input-output processing model in which the sensory end is taken as the starting point. Perception is described as proceeding through a series of feedforward or bottom-up processing stages, and top-down influences are equated with back-projections or feedback from higher to lower areas. Freeman aptly describes this view as the "passivist-cognitivist view" of the brain.
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> From an enactive viewpoint, things look rather different. Brain processes are recursive, reentrant, and self-activating, and do not start or stop anywhere. Instead of treating perception as a later stage of sensation and taking the sensory receptors as the starting point for analysis, the enactive approach treats perception and emotion as dependent aspects of intentional action, and takes the brain's self-generated, endogenous activity as the starting point for neurobiological analysis. This activity arises far from the sensors—in the frontal lobes, limbic system, or temporal and associative cortices—and reflects the organism's overall protentional set—its states of expectancy, preparation, affective tone, attention, and so on. These states are necessarily active at the same time as the sensory inflow (Engel, Fries, and Singer 2001; Varela et al. 2001).
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> "Whereas a passivist-cognitivist view would describe such states as acting in a top-down

> manner on sensory processing, from an enactive perspective top down and bottom up are heuristic terms for what in reality is a large-scale network that integrates incoming and endogenous activities on the basis of its own internally established reference points. Hence, from an enactive viewpoint, we need to look to this large-scale dynamic network in order to understand how emotion and intentional action emerge through self-organizing neural activity."

Evolutionary Selfishness and Enaction:

Alongside affective programs controlling rage, Protevi hypothesizes a program for prosocaility. He says that humans are primarily motivated not by rational self-interest , but toward prosocial behavior, which he claims is the product of an innate , biological capacity for targeted release of neurotransmitters to produce feeling structures motivating prosocial behavior.

"Prosociality or other-directed care and cooperation, even at a cost to the agent, is our evolutionary heritage; it is an adaptation. Prosociality means a primary orientation to sympathetic care and fair cooperation, which is nonetheless admitting of rational egoist-driven violence and competition under duress." (Protevi 2017)

Rather than conforming to the image of Economic Man , the Hobbesian self-interested brute functioning according to 'rational cost-benefit analysis', in Protevi's words, humans are motivated to cooperate with others. But this altruism is itself born of self-interest, given that it is centered around the needs of the individual organism (or gene or group of organisms) and the way this benefits the group is on the basis of selfish needs. Comparing the module for rage and the program for prosociality, Protevi says: "All this is not to deny the selfish nature of the basic emotions of rage and fear."

The 'self' of the gene, organism or species is in competition with what is outside of it, an inside is delineated in opposition to an outside. Protevi describes a dynamic of recompense, an investment that will be payed back to the organism or species (he endorses multilevel selection of altruism , from gene to organism to group) for altruism and individual sacrifice. The reward is split off from the immediate motivating logic of the organism's behavior. In sum, Protevi treats what affects the conscious subject from below via the biological body and what conditions it from above in the social and physical environment in terms of self-enclosed sources of impingement, as partially independent and external forces or constraints.

Varela and Thompson(1991) say that in many approaches in the social sciences

> "The goal of the self is assumed to be profit-getting the most at least cost. The unconstrained economic man, such as Hobbes's despot, continues his acquisitions until there is nothing left for anyone else. Therefore, constraints are needed: overt social force, internalized socialization, subtle psychological mechanisms. A general theory called social exchange theory, widely used in social psychology, decision theory, sociology, economics, and political science, views all of human activity, individually and in groups, in terms of input and output calculations, paying and receiving. We believe that this implicit vision of motivation underlies not only social science but many contemporary people's views of their own action. Even altruism is defined in terms of an

individual obtaining (psychological) utility from benefitting another."

> "What does the mindfulness/awareness tradition or enactive cognitive science have to contribute to this portrait of self-interest? The mindful, open-ended approach to experience reveals that moment by moment this so-called self occurs only in relation to the other. If I want praise, love, fame, or power, there has to be another (even if only a mental one) to praise, love, know about, or submit to me. If I want to obtain things, they have to be things that I don't already have. Even with respect to the desire for pleasure, the pleasure is something to which I am in a relation. Because self is always co-dependent with other (even at the gross level we are now discussing), the force of self-interest is always other-directed in the very same respect with which it is self-directed. What, then, are people doing who appear so self-interested as opposed to other-interested?
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> Mindfulness/awareness meditators suggest that those people are struggling, in a confused way, to maintain the sense of a separate self by engaging in self-referential relationships with the other. Whether I gain or lose, there can be a sense of I; if there is nothing to be gained or lost, I am groundless. If Hobbes's despot were actually to succeed in obtaining everything in the universe, he would have to find some other preoccupation quickly, or he would be in a woeful state: he would be unable to maintain his sense of himself."

To understand Heidegger's concept of being in the world is not to have to ask how human beings achieve prosocial behavior, (Protevi asks why we are not all psychopaths, and has to come up with a special adaptive mechanism to explain it), rather it is to explain how human beings ever fail to act for the sake of others. In enactivist models, subject, body and social environment belong as inseparable aspects of a single mind-body-world system in constant state of reciprocal interaction. The being of the human in its environment must be understood not as an oppositional conjunction of separated beings (conscious subjectivity, unconscious body and outside world), but as a single bodily-embedded being-in-the-world. Evolutionary selection pressures operate not on the self of the gene, organism or group as a self-enclosed unit but on the structurally coupled interaction between organism and environment.

Thompson(2007) writes:

> "I urge that natural selection be conceived of not as an independent filter or constraint on viability but rather as an emergent consequence of the structural coupling between autonomous systems and their environments. This issue brings us to the fourth point concerning enactive evolution: that the structural coupling or interactive dance between reproductive autonomous systems and their environments generates natural selection. By this I mean that natural selection results from the "satisficing" of viable trajectories effected by the autonomous networks themselves in their structural coupling with their environments. The key point is that natural selection is not an external force or constraint impinging on the networks from an independent environment; rather, it is the outcome of the history of co-determination between the networks and their surroundings."

Enactive processes are autonomously self-maintaining. But this self-maintenance is not the self-identical repetition of a thing or algorithmic pattern. Rather it is the continual self-transformation of a system by its exposure to an outside. In some sense an organism becomes foreign to itself in each moment of re-establishing its autonomy through the assimilating of outside elements it requires for its continued survival. Thus, words like 'autonomy,' self-maintenance', 'closure' and 'subjectivity' refer to a balance between alienation and consistency rather than the suppression of

otherness by a dominating internalism. ‘Selfishness’ in enactive terms does not refer to what is good for the thriving of a system locked into an unchanging , self-contained mode of functioning and in competition with other organisms in its environment. Rather , the enactive ‘self’ is an integral way of becoming other than itself, that is, of continuing to be itself differently. As a result, interactive sense-making through cultural discursive processes produces a form of autonomy and self-maintenance that cannot be reduced to the separate contributions of its participants. Interactive sense-making is ‘selfish’ for the sake of the shared activity as interpreted though each participant’s constantly but integrally changing perspective.

De Jaegher(2015) writes:

“Interactions are not simply bits of information to be processed by individual cognizers, but rather, interaction processes move the participants in their sense-making activities, and these include affect.“ Participatory sense-making reaches “directly into the precarious network of self-maintaining processes that constitute a subject’s identity. Thus, our encounters with others may not only modulate our very self-maintenance, but to some extent even enable and constrain it. This means that the constitution of our subjectivity can be strongly dependent on the history of social encounters.” “Thus, self-constitution and self-affection happen with and through others while-importantly and basically-at the same time always retaining an aspect of closure.”

“This sharing in inter-affectivity comes through participating in a process that is not simply the summation of individual activities, but a jointly created and literally embodied pattern that affects each of our affections.”

In the same way that Protevi treats bodily-affective aspects of behavior in terms of the non-intentional, unconscious influence of near-reflexive internal modular programs on a conscious subject , he models social influence via classical and operant forms of conditioning impinging upon the subject from ‘above the level of’ the subject’s normative aims.

> “….operant conditioning ….triggers an unconscious, automatic “read and react” mode in which soldiers fire individually on whatever human-shaped targets appear in their range of vision. Not a berserker rage, but a conditioned reflex. Here, the subject is bypassed by direct access of the military machine to reflexes embedded in the spinal cord of the soldier – as clear an instance of political physiology as one could imagine.”(Protevi 2004)
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> "Soldiers are acculturated to dehumanize the enemy by a series of racial slurs. This acculturation is especially powerful when accomplished through rhythmic chanting while running, for such entrainment weakens personal identity to produce a group subject". "Desensitization is merely an enabling factor for the role of classical and operant conditioning in modern training."
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> "In addition to the affective aspect of heightened desensitization, simulation training constitutes a new cognitive group subject. The instant decision of “shoot / no shoot” is solicited by the presence or absence of key traits in the gestalt of the situation. Such instant decisions are more than reflexes, but operate at the very edge of the conscious awareness of the soldiers and

> involve complex subpersonal processes of threat perception (Correll et al 2006). In addition to this attenuation of individual agency, cutting-edge communication technology now allows soldiers to network together in real time. With this networking we see an extended / distributed cognition culminating in "topsight" for a commander who often doesn't "command" in the sense of micro-manage but who observes and intervenes at critical points (Arquilla and Rondfeldt 2000: 22). In other words, contemporary team-building applications through real-time networking are a cybernetic application of video games that goes above the level of the subject (Fletcher 1999). In affective entrainment, instant decision-making, and cognitive "topsight" the soldiers produced by rhythmic chanting and intensive simulation training are nodes within a cybernetic organism, the fighting group, which maintains its functional integrity and tactical effectiveness by real-time communication technology. It's the emergent group with the distributed decisions of the soldiers that is the cyborg here, operating at the thresholds of the individual subjectivities of the soldiers." (Protevi 2008)

How does Protevi's entrainment of the group 'cybernetic organism' compare to De Jaegher's shared inter-affectivity? In the latter case, the functionally integrated, normatively goal-directed sense-making concerns of each participant are enmeshed with those of others in a reciprocal interplay, which affects each participant even as each maintains their own perspective on what is being shared. Individual agency is not weakened, but instead enriched though its exposure to the vantage of the others. In Protevi's group cyborg example, the goal-oriented perspective of each participant is not involved in the shared activity, but bypassed or attentuated so as to trigger subpersonal near-reflex programs of action. These behaviors are nearly meaningless to the individuals themselves, and only take on intentional significance from the vantage of the goals of whoever is in change of the group. Protevi's cybernetic organism nicely illustrates the way that his treatment of living systems splits mind, body and world into externally and weakly interacting encapsulated redundancies:bodily affect modules are encapsulated off from the conscious subject which they motivate, outside of awareness, from below. Meanwhile, individual subjective intentionalites are encapsulated off from the group intentionality that enculturates them from above. We are not given a way to see affective and cognitive-intentional processes of persons as co-implicating each other as an inseparable mesh, nor the joint activities of discursive groups as an enriching furthering of self-constitution rather than as an invading impingement from 'above' the self.

If there is one point on which I agree with Protevi, it is that Deleuze's approach has the means to enrich, supplement and transform embodied enactive accounts. As I have argued in this paper, however, I don't believe Protevi's model is capable of achieving this goal. Deleuzian thinking, as I interpret it, grounds the integrative features of enactivism within a radicalized account of difference whereas Protevi's perspective has not succeeded in overcoming the vestiges of essentialism burdening embodied enactive accounts that haven't absorbed the lessons of phenomenology. The politics of Protevi's political affect approach suffers from this essentializing tendency. For instance , when he asks if "we can be satisfied with abstract principles of cognition that ignore gender effects", he means to open up what he sees as 4ea's generic 'abstract subject' to the invasions from the social above and bodily below that I have described on these pages, not just to genderizing, but to racializing and many other sorts of 'izings' that the 4EA's abstract subject pretends not to be already shaped by. But far from being generic, the enactivist subject particularizes and contextualizes what Protevi encapsulates within

his political invasions from above and below. In an enactive system, the 'self' to be preserved is not a body but a normative pattern of interaction. Thus the self presupposes and includes the social and material environment rather than each of these aspects of world being walled off from the others.

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